

Message Text

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PAGE 01 QUITO 00001 161330Z
ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 PM-04 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 CIAE-00
INR-07 NSAE-00 TRSE-00 OMB-01 IGA-02 DHA-02 PRS-01
L-03 EB-08 ACDA-07 MC-02 AID-05 /075 W
-----162023Z 110555 /40

R 161245Z APR 77
FM AMEMBASSY QUITO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3929
SECDEF WASHDC
INFO USCINCSO QUARRY HTS CZ

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTITN 1 OF 2 QUITO 2438

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: MILI, MASS, EC
SUBJECT: REQUEST FOR AIR DEFENSE SURVEY TEAM FOR ECUADOR

1. SUMMARY: ECUADOR, FACED WITH WHAT IT PERCEIVES AS A
SERIOUS THREAT TO ITS NATIONAL SECURITY FROM PERU, IS
DETERMINED TO ACQUIRE A MINIMALLY ADEQUATE DEFENSIVE CAPA-
BILITY, SOMETHING IT NOW LACKS. THE GOE HAS THE FUNDS TO DO
SO, BUT IT WOULD GREATLY PREFER TO PURCHASE MAJOR DEFENSE
ITEMS FROM THE US, BOTH FOR POLITICO-PSYCHOLOGICAL REASONS
AND ON TECHNICAL GROUNDS. THIS MESSAGE IS ADDRESSED PRIMARILY
TO THE GOE'S MOST URGENT PRIORITY, AN AIR DEFENSE SYSTEM.
HOWEVER, THE ARGUMENTS IN FAVOR OF A FORTHCOMING USG POSTURE
APPLY TO OTHER DEFENSIVE WEAPONS AS WELL. THESE ARGUMENTS ARE:

(1) THIS IS THE ONE MILITARY GOVERNMENT IN THE HEMISPHERE
WHICH IS EARNESTLY TRYING TO RETURN ITS COUNTRY TO DEMOCRATIC
RULE; (2) IN SPITE OF ITS MILITARY CHARACTER, THE GOE HAS
A GOOD HUMAN RIGHTS RECORD AND (3) THIS GOVERNMENT HAS
MADE CONSIDERABLE EFFORTS TO RESOLVE DIFFICULT BILATERAL
PROBLEMS WITH THE USG, NOTABLY THE GULF INVESTMENT DIS-
PUTE AND THE FISHING CONTROVERSY. MY REQUEST IN THIS
MESSAGE IS THAT THE DEPARTMENTS OF STATE AND DEFENSE AGREE
TO PROVIDE AN AIR DEFENSE SURVEY TEAM TO HELP ECUADOR
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 QUITO 00001 161330Z

DETERMINE ITS LEGITIMATE NEEDS IN THIS FIELD AND RECOMMEND
COMPONENTS. END SUMMARY.

2. THE GOE HAS ECONOMIC RESOURCES WHICH WILL PERMIT IT
TO PURCHASE SOME KIND OF AIR DEFENSE CAPABILITY, AND THE
MAJOR QUESTION IS WHAT IT WILL PURCHASE AND FROM WHOM. THE
ECUADOREAN MILITARY WOULD GREATLY PREFER TO BUY FROM THE

US FOR THE USUAL REASONS THAT US EQUIPMENT IS GENERALLY BETTER QUALITY, MORE ACCURATE AND DEPENDABLE, AND BETTER SUPPORTED. ADDITIONALLY, THEY BELIEVE THAT THE IDENTIFICATION WITH THE US PER SE GAINED THROUGH THE SALES WILL PROVE TO BE AN IMPORTANT PSYCHOLOGICAL DETERRENT TO OUTSIDE ATTACK. THE QUESTION OF WHAT THEY WILL BUY REMAINS UP IN THE AIR, AND THERE IS A GOOD CHANCE THAT, BECAUSE OF LACK OF EXPERIENCE IN THIS AREA, THEY WILL SPEND UNNECESSARY MONEY OR ACQUIRE UNNEEDED OR INADEQUATE EQUIPMENT. HEREIN LIES THE PROBLEM: ECUADOREAN MILITARY OFFICIALS DISCUSS WEAPONS SYSTEMS, SUCH AS THE I-HAWK OR F-4S WITH US WITHOUT REALLY HAVING A CONCRETE IDEA WHAT THEY REALLY NEED. THEY HAVE ONLY A RUDIMENTARY IDEA OF THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE THREAT AND THE CAPABILITY OF VARIOUS WEAPONS SYSTEM TO COUNTERACT IT.

3. UP TO NOW, THE USG RESPONSE TO ECUADOREAN DEMARCHES ON SPECIFIC COMPONENTS OF AN AIR DEFENSE SYSTEM, E.G., KFIR AIRCRAFT AND I-HAWK MISSILES, HAS BEEN EITHER NEGATIVE OR EQUIVOCAL. I AM NOT TAKING ISSUE WITH THE KFIR DECISION, AND I UNDERSTAND THE CONCERN IN WASHINGTON ABOUT THE HAWK. BUT THE IMPRESSION, INADVERTENT OR OTHERWISE, THAT WE HAVE LEFT WITH THE ECUADOREAN MILITARY IS THAT WE ARE UNCONCERNED WITH THEIR DEFENSE PROBLEMS.

4. GIVEN THIS SITUATION, MY STAFF AND I BELIEVE THAT ONE GREAT SERVICE WE COULD OFFER THE GOE WOULD BE TO PROVIDE IT WITH A PROFESSIONAL AIR DEFENSE SURVEY TEAM WHICH COULD STUDY ITS NEEDS IN DEPTH AND RECOMMEND A SYSTEM WHICH WOULD

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CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 QUITO 00001 161330Z

MEET ITS GOALS. SUCH A SERVICE WOULD DEMONSTRATE PALPABLY TO THE GOE THAT OUR DECISIONS ON SPECIFIC WEAPONRY DO NOT MEAN THAT WE ARE INDIFFERENT TO THE GOE'S SECURITY PROBLEM OR UNMINDFUL OF ITS GOOD PERFORMANCE ON MATTERS OF CONCERN TO US. I RECOMMEND THAT THE DEPARTMENTS OF STATE AND DEFENSE AGREE TO OFFER THE SERVICES OF SUCH A TEAM TO THE GOE. ALTHOUGH WE WILL DISCLAIM IN ADVANCE THAT THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE TEAM CONSTITUTE AN OFFER TO SELL (AND I BELIEVE THAT WE CAN MAKE THIS CLEAR) I ADD ONE IMPORTANT SUGGESTION: IF THE TEAM RECOMMENDS US AIR DEFENSE EQUIPMENT, ALBEIT I-HAWK OR CHAPPARAL MISSILES, VULCAN GUNS, OR F-5 INTERCEPTORS ARMED WITH SIDEWINDER MISSILES, WE SHOULD STAND WILLING TO PROVIDE THAT EQUIPMENT, WHICH I BELIEVE CAN BE JUSTIFIED WITHIN GENERAL ARMS CONTROL OBJECTIVES.

CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 01 QUITO 02438 02 OF 02 161338Z
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 QUITO 2438

5. AS NOTED, I BELIEVE THAT ECUADOR WARRANTS SPECIAL ATTENTION FOR ARMS TRANSFERS, NOT ONLY BECAUSE OF ITS LEGITIMATE DEFENSE NEEDS, BUT BECAUSE IT IS BECOMING MORE AND MORE THE KIND OF RARE LDC WHOSE CONDUCT AND ATTITUDES CLOSELY DOVETAIL WITH OUR OWN. FOR INSTANCE, THE MILITARY GOVERNMENT IS MOVING TO HAND OVER POWER TO A DEMOCRATICALLY-ELECTED CIVILIAN GOVERNMENT AND ECUADOR WITHIN A YEAR WILL LIKELY BECOME ONLY THE FOURTH IBERO-AMERICAN DEMOCRACY. ITS HUMAN RIGHTS RECORD IS CERTAINLY BETTER THAN ALL BUT TWO OR THREE LATIN AMERICAN COUNTRIES. IF TREATED PROPERLY BY US, IT COULD BECOME A VALUABLE ALLY IN PROMOTING HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE REGION. ECUADOR HAS ALSO GONE A LONG WAY TO ACCOMMODATE US INTERESTS IN A VARIETY OF AREAS (FISHING AND FAIR TREATMENT OF US INVESTMENTS, AMONG OTHERS). IN ITS FOREIGN POLICY, WE HAVE SEEN SIGNS THAT ECUADOR CAN BE MOVED TO A MORE HELPFUL APPROACH IF WE ARE SYMPATHETIC TO ITS BASIC DEFENSE CONCERNS. GIVEN STATEMENTS BY USG OFFICIALS (INCLUDING THE PRESIDENT IN HIS OAS SPEECH) THAT OUR ASSISTANCE TO AND SUPPORT FOR OTHER COUNTRIES WILL BE CONTINGENT TO SOME EXTENT ON THEIR SHARING OUR ATTITUDE TOWARD CERTAIN BASIC VALUES, IT IS NOT SURPRISING THAT ECUADOREANTL
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PAGE 02 QUITO 02438 02 OF 02 161338Z

RECIPROCITY AND ASSISTANCE FROM US IN THIS MATTER WHICH IS OF BASIC NATIONAL CONCERN TO THEM. IN FACT, IT SEEMS TO ME THAT IN ORDER TO MAINTAIN CREDIBILITY IN SOME OF THE POLICIES WE ADVOCATE, WE MUST COOPERATE WITH COUNTRIES

LIKE ECUADOR, AND RESPOND TO NEEDS THAT THEY SEE AS LEGITIMATE, WHERE IT DOES NO VIOLENCE TO OUR OTHER POLICY CONSIDERATIONS. IF WE CANNOT RECIPROCATATE WITH COUNTRIES WHOSE INTERNAL SYSTEMS ARE CONGENIAL TO US AND WHOSE FOREIGN POLICIES ARE SUSCEPTIBLE TO MODIFICATIONS IN OUR FAVOR, WE RISK RENDERING OUR FOREIGN POLICY UNINTELLIGIBLE AND INEXPLICABLE TO THE REST OF THE WORLD, AND ESPECIALLY IN THIS REGION.

6. HAVING RECOMMENDED OFFERING A SURVEY TEAM, I WANT TO NOTE CERTAIN FACTORS WHICH I BELIEVE WILL ASSIST THE DEPARTMENTS IN CONSIDERING THAT RECOMMENDATION. MY DEFENSE ATTACHE AND HIS STAFF HAVE PREPARED AN INFORMAL ANALYSIS OF ECUADOR'S AIR DEFENSE NEEDS. I STRESS INFORMAL SINCE NEITHER HE NOR ANY OF HIS STAFF ARE AIR DEFENSE EXPERTS. THAT STUDY, WHICH I AM HAVING TRANSMITTED AS A SEPARATE STATE-DEFENSE CABLE, MAINTAINS THAT THE I-HAWK MISSILE IS NOT REPEAT NOT NECESSARY FOR AN ADEQUATE AIR DEFENSE FOR ECUADOR AND THAT IT WOULD BE PROHIBITIVELY EXPENSIVE. IT INDICATES THAT A CHAPPARAL/VULCAN OR CHAPPARAL/DUSTER SYSTEM COMBINED WITH INTERCEPTOR AIRCRAFT AND WEAPONS THE ECUADOREANS ALREADY HAVE WOULD BE ADEQUATE. THIS, I BELIEVE THAT ONE OF OUR MAJOR CONCERNS, I.E., THE POLICY QUESTION OF PROVIDING OR DENYING THE I-HAWK TO ECUADOR MIGHT BE FINESSED BY MEANS OF A PROFESSIONAL SURVEY. BUT I EMPHASIZE THAT THIS IS ONLY A ROUGH-CUT, NON-EXPERT OPINION.

7. ON THE OTHER HAND, THE STUDY DOES INDICATE THAT SOME KIND OF INTERCEPTOR AIRCRAFT WILL HAVE TO BE PART OF AN ADEQUATE AIR DEFENSE SYSTEM, AND WE BELIEVE A SURVEY WILL BEAR THAT OUT. WE SHOULD BE PREPARED, THEREFORE, TO COME TO GRIPS WITH THAT DECISION UPON THE RECOMMENDATION OF THE

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 QUITO 02438 02 OF 02 161338Z

SURVEY TEAM.

8. ACTION REQUESTED: I REQUEST THAT THE DEPARTMENTS OF STATE AND DEFENSE APPROVE THE SENDING OF AN AIR DEFENSE SURVEY TEAM TO ECUADOR WITHIN THE NEXT MONTH, WITH THE UNDERSTANDING THAT THAT TEAM WILL MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE GOE FOR AN ADEQUATE AIR DEFENSE SYSTEM, AND THAT IF THOSE RECOMMENDATIONS INCLUDE US EQUIPMENT, WE BE PREPARED TO VIEW FAVORABLY THE SALE OF SUCH EQUIPMENT THROUGH COMMERCIAL OR FMS CHANNELS.

BLOOMFIELD

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: AIR DEFENSE, MILITARY ADVISERS, DEFENSIVE WEAPONS SYSTEMS, NATIONAL SECURITY THREATS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 16-Apr-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977QUITO02438
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
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From: QUITO
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Image Path:
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Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770450/aaaabrbl.tel
Line Count: 219
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
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Message ID: d1e4cba3-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION ARA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 06-Apr-2005 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2786784
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: REQUEST FOR AIR DEFENSE SURVEY TEAM FOR ECUADOR
TAGS: MILI, MASS, PINS, MPOL, EC, US, PE
To: STATE DOD
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/d1e4cba3-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009